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MAPPING YOUR PAST:

Genealogy at the Illinois State Archives

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JESSE WHITE
Secretary of State
and State Archivist

....Turning back the the hands of time

It is my pleasure as Secretary of State to serve as State Archivist. The Illinois State Archives houses the official memories of our great state. More than 250 years of history are preserved in valuable government documents, land titles, militia poll books and historic photographs. Each document and photograph reveals something unique about past life in Illinois and may be of help in your genealogical research.

I encourage you to take advantage of the tremendous wealth of information at the Illinois State Archives. By learning about family heritage and the history of our state, we grow not only in understanding but also in appreciation for who we are as individuals and citizens of Illinois.

Jesse White

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Secretary of State
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Our doors are open

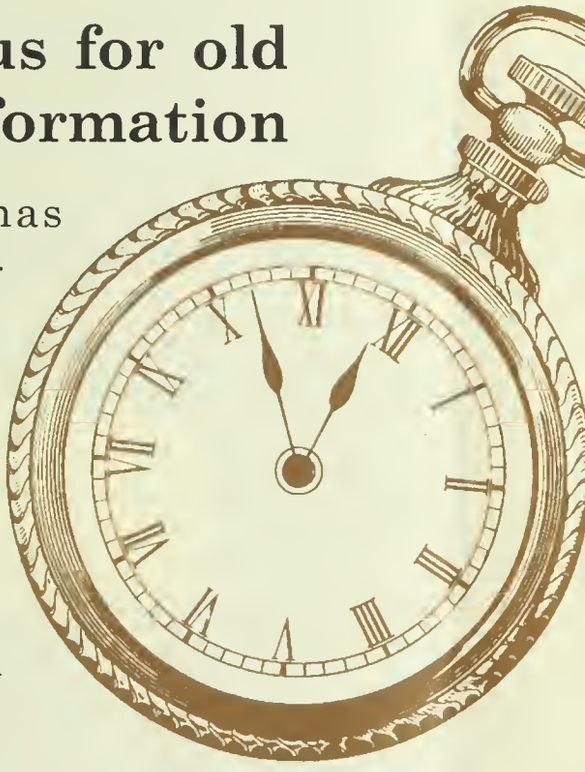
When extensive research is involved, many genealogists find it's best done in person at the Illinois State Archives – and our reference staff is here to help. We're open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Mon.-Fri., and Sat., 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (except holiday weekends). The Archives is located just south of the State Capitol.

Or drop us a line

The Archives staff will do research based on mail requests, charging only for photocopies. Please follow these guidelines:

- Request no more than two specific names or items per mailing.
- Doing a name search? Try to provide: (1) the individual's complete name, age and birthplace. Include the same information for spouse and children if possible, (2) county and township names, (3) the name of the record to be searched as well as its date span.
- Wait until you receive a response to your first request before submitting additional ones.

Count on us for old census information



The Archives has both state and federal census records spanning more than 100 years.

1810-1860: Indexes are available covering state and decennial federal census records. Note: The only

reasonably complete state census for this period, 1855, has only names of the heads of households; other family entries are simple tallies. This is true for all pre-1850 federal censuses.

1865: Since this final state census is only partially indexed, Archives staff also needs a township name when using it. Unindexed schedules of cities cannot be searched by staff. This census lists only heads of households.

1870: With a limited county index, this census needs both county and township locations for best search results. No city searches.

1880: Index for this census lists only households with children under age 10. The index can be searched for names of household heads, and a review of schedules if township is provided. No city searches.

1890: The federal census was lost in a Washington D.C. fire in 1921.

1900-1910-1920: Indexes can be searched for names of household heads but not for the actual schedules (an index to each census exists).

The Archives also has the special federal decennial censuses, 1850-1880. Two are profession-specific: agriculture (1850-1880) and industry (1850-1870). The 1880 census also profiles person with disabilities, dependents and delinquents.

Births, Deaths and Wedding Bells

Births and deaths were first recorded with some regularity in 1877, and are best documented in the county in which the event occurred

— although some are available through the Archives. The Department of Public Health (605 W. Jefferson St., Springfield, IL 62702; 217/782-6553) also maintains such records after 1916. Illinois deaths recorded in 1916-1947 are available on an Archives microfilm index.

The Archives also has complete federal mortality schedules for 1850, 1860 and 1880. For 1870, the federal mortality schedules are available only for those counties alphabetically listed after Kankakee County. In all four mortality schedules, the records reflect only those deaths occurring during the year before enumeration.

Marriage records are available through the Illinois Statewide Marriage Index database in cooperation with the Illinois State Genealogical Society. The index focuses on marriage records pre-1818 to 1900.

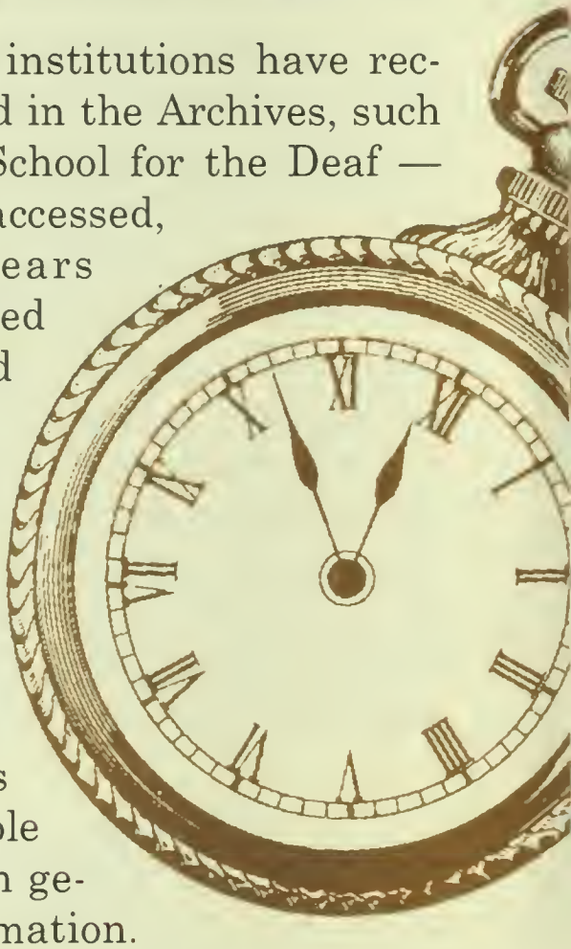
Those who served in wars of old

Interested in the Illinois units fighting during the War of 1812? Or the Black Hawk War, Mexican War, Civil War, or Spanish-American War? The Archives has name indexes for Illinois units serving during these conflicts. Also available are federal World War I draft registration records.

Post-war information on veterans and spouses may be found in the Archives' resident files of the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home (1887-1967) and the Illinois Soldiers' Widows' Home (1896-1960). Some information restrictions apply.

Also available are microfilm records of some pension information from the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812; records from the National Home in Danville (1898-1934); and the publication, *Honor Roll of Veterans Buried in Illinois*.

Unexpected sources



Many state institutions have records stored in the Archives, such as the Illinois School for the Deaf — although to be accessed, at least 75 years must have lapsed since the record was first established. All mental health records are permanently closed. Holdings of state prison records and related parole files also contain genealogical information.

Records of the land

Only the first purchaser of land from the federal or state government is included in the Archives' indexed records; all subsequent transactions are recorded with the county recorder. The Archives has

the purchaser's name and residence, the date the land was purchased and its legal description. Aspects such as the buyer's former residence are not indicated.

Local and county resources

Staff can search indexes of specific county histories and provide copies of biographical sketches. A wealth of genealogical information also is available through the many local records housed in the Illinois Regional Archives Depository system (IRAD). There are seven such depositories located within state universities around the state. IRAD staff will perform a limited amount of research upon request.

Interlibrary loan

Several state and federal censuses are available through the interlibrary loan system of the Illinois State Library. Also available are war indexes and a census records index for 1810-1855. Your local librarian must direct this request to the Illinois State Library.

Other aspects

In addition to the materials detailed above, genealogy researchers may find the following information of interest:

• Since 1985 the Illinois State Archives has worked with the Illinois State Genealogical Society (ISGS) on projects of mutual genealogical interest such as the Statewide Marriage

Index. You may address inquiries to the Society at its office in the Norton Building at: ISGS, P.O. Box 10195, Springfield, IL 62791 (217/789-1968).

• You also may consult the Archives' less frequently examined records. "The Descriptive Inventory of the Archives of the State of Illinois" lists all available state record series. If a copy cannot be found through your local library, you may purchase it from the Archives for $20.

"A Summary Guide to Local Governmental Records in the Illinois Regional Archives" also is available through your local library or may be purchased from the State Archives for $6.

More information

Illinois State Archives
Margaret Cross Norton Building
Springfield, Illinois 62756
(217) 782-4682
FAX (217) 524-3930
www.sos.state.il.us

Please note that the Illinois Regional Archives Depositories (IRAD) is located at the same address; phone (217) 782-3645.

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